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WEEKLY VISITANT.

"OURS ARE THE PLANS OF FAIR DELIGHTFUL PEACE,
"UNWARP'D BY PARTY RAGE, TO LIVE LIKE BROTHERS."

SALEM—SATURDAY EVENING, FEBRUARY 8, 1806.

ORIGINAL PAPERS.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

ON THE PROGRESS OF THE ARTS AND SCIENCES.

MANY modern inventions are attributed to the ancients. Dark and obscure hints, which may bear almost any construction, are supposed to have suggested those improvements in the Arts, which are now of so much importance to the world. In some very few cases this may have happened; but in most, the inventions are from those whose education has been such, as to render them entirely unable to plod over ancient lore, sufficiently to take advantage of any hints which may be scattered over it.—When any thing great has been discovered, the antiquarian immediately discovers something which his imagination converts into proofs, that the discovery is only something revived, which had been previously forgotten.

That the ancients had some idea of theories which are now universally received, cannot be denied. Pythagoras taught the same system of the revolution of the planets round the sun which is now received, and no doubt on many other subjects relative to the sciences, which we suppose to have been known only to the moderns, the ancients had some ideas of the truth, but were certainly deficient in proving whether their ideas were correct or not. With experimental philosophy they were unacquainted in a great degree.

In some of the fine arts, their superiority is manifest. Sculpture is one in which it is confessed, for no modern has been able to equal them. Michael Angelo, perhaps the greatest artist of modern ages, undertook to supply an arm to the Apollo of Belvidere, but after having been employed a year, and when he was going to annex the arm to the statue, was so enraged at its inferiority, that he dashed it to pieces on the pavement.—Some specimens of Architecture in modern ages excel the ancients, but in general, I believe the ancient temples and palaces excelled the modern. If however, in this art, the moderns have excelled the ancients, it is not to be wondered at, as they have proceeded on the same plan, and of course must make some improvements, especially if as Kaims says the art is still in its infancy.*

* See Kaims' Elements of Criticism, vol. 2. p. 340.

The manners, however, of the ancient nations, before the downfall of the Roman empire, were greatly refined, and the Sciences and Arts had made a great progress, when the barbarous nations, like a torrent that has burst its banks, swept them all off, in one undistinguished ruin.

But we must not attribute the destruction of learning and the arts and sciences, solely to the irruptions of the barbarians. Real learning had died long before. After the reign of Trajan, Rome produced but very few authors, whose works are deserving the attention of their posterity. Their writers were engaged in perpetual disputes on religion, and they treated this subject in such a manner as to excite contempt in succeeding ages. Metaphysical disquisitions on this subject were carried to such a height, as to be absolutely unintelligible. The effects were the most horrible persecutions, and bloody wars. The fine arts had become so much neglected, that when Constantine the Great made his triumphal entry into Rome, they tore down the beautiful statues of his predecessors, for materials to build a clumsy heavy arch for himself. There, was seen the head of one Emperor forming the key-stone of the arch, and the body of another forming its base.

Though a much greater degree of darkness was the immediate consequence of this irruption of barbarism, yet the final effects were good. The Romans had become so debased by luxury and fanaticism, that a reformation and revival of science and manners was not to be expected but in a long succession of ages. The barbarians, who settled among them, firm and hardy in their manners, and vigorous in their minds, deprived their new subjects of every means of luxury, and made them assimilate their habits to those of the conquerors. It is easier to form the mind of savages when uncorrupt, than to change the manners of a people debased by a long continuance in luxurious and depraved habits. Hence therefore, as the barbarians assimilated the Romans to themselves it was more probable, that the Arts and Sciences would revive, after than before the conquest.

But though the barbarians were, perhaps, in this manner, agents for the restoration of learning, yet they bore a violent hostility against it, so much so, that probably they would have destroyed every vestige of it, had not some asylum been found. The monks, those inveterate foes to learning, in the mass of mankind, for their own benefit, preserved it in their cells, whence in after times it gradually and imperceptibly emerged, and effected the ruin of its enemies, slavery and priestcraft.

After the barbarians had quietly fixed themselves in their conquests, many circumstances contributed to retard the progress of learning. Their system of government, a mixture of anarchy and slavery,* was not calculated to foster the arts and sciences, to which a state of peace and security is necessary.

The clergy of that period found, that to retain and increase the power they had acquired, it was necessary, that they should continue to possess the learning of the age, and to keep the rest of mankind in ignorance; and as the learning was already theirs, they found it for a long period an easy matter, not to impart it to mankind. They succeeded in acquiring an astonishing in-

* It was a mixture of anarchy and slavery, because the members of the state were almost entirely independent on each other. Private wars were waged by the barons, the king not being able to control them. The villains could no more be called members of the state than horses, yet as they were the mass of mankind, it was a deplorable slavery, in every sense of the word.

fluence over the minds of the people. So great was the ignorance of the latter, that any thing the most absurd and ridiculous was imposed on their belief. The Pope assumed the title and attributes of the Deity, and was more worshipped on earth, than any of the ancient deities by the pagans. The monks, lords of the earth, committed the most horrible crimes with impunity,* and finding learning less and less necessary, followed the example of the people, and sunk into such a state of ignorance, th at many of them could not even read.

But when the art of government became better understood, in spite of the malice of monks, learning began to rear its head. The Arabians, the most learned people of the age, gave some ofi t to the Christians. Even among the monks were found some, who preferred the good of mankind, to the retention of their own power. Friar Bacon was the most learned and ingenious man of his age. He carried learning to a height previously unknown in the Gothic world, and invented many of the instruments now used in the study of Astronomy. His reward was to be reputed a sorcerer, and the age did not follow his example, in studying what might be of any use to mankind. They studied the same kind of learning that was most valued just before the destruction of the Roman Empire. Aristotle became the god of learning. His works, not well understood, introduced the scholastic philosophy ; a kind of learning which seemed designed to shew to how great a degree the human mind could be perverted. Disputes the most frivolous and impious were carried on with a degree of virulence scarcely credible. Such as, "Whether the Virgin Mary was acquainted with the mechanic and liberal arts ? Had she a thorough knowledge of the Book of Sentences, and of all the chapters it contains?"† *In quo casu veræ essent hæ propositiones, Deus est Equus, Asinus, Diabolus*, &c. Their sermons and writings of all kinds, were composed of a jumble of metaphysics ; and but few in these times will take the trouble of wading through them, or if they do, their labour is entirely lost. No other science was in the least attended to, and even metaphysical science was totally misunderstood.

It is probable, that if this kind of learning had never been known, the world would not have remained so long in darkness. But the clergy, besides the taste they seemed to have for it, found that they rendered religion so obscure, that none of the laity would have any inclination to attempt the study of it. They carefully kept the scriptures out of the way, as a knowledge of them in the people would have been a death blow to their power, and would have shewn the uselessness of their learning. Nothing is more inconsistent with the principles of Christianity than their abominable lives, and impious doctrines.

Incidentally, however, the Roman Catholic religion produced some good

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* When a priest was accused of any crime and denied it, a curious trial by ordeal took place. There was provided a piece of dry hard bread and some cheese, and after some pompous ceremony to deceive the people, the party accused approached the altar and eat the bread and cheese, praying that the angel Gabriel might come, stop it in his throat, and strangle him, if he was guilty. It is needless to say he was always acquitted. See Henry's History of England.

† This work may be considered as the foundation of the school divinity and was written by Peter Lombard about the middle of the eleventh century. See Bayle's Dictionary, Art. St. Thomas Aquinas.

effects, as it contributed very much to the revival of the arts. The images and pictures they worshipped, they endeavored should be formed in the best manner. Hence they gave vast encouragement to all artists—emulation was produced, and the arts flourished. Painting particularly arrived to a degree of perfection, which will hardly be surpassed. The efforts of some beneficent princes, joined to this encouragement, succeeded in reviving real knowledge, and all the fine arts appeared in its train.

When the art of Printing was discovered, Science triumphed over all obstacles, and was soon spread over Europe. By this means philosophers communicated their discoveries to the world, and the fame they acquired encouraged them to redouble their efforts. This paved the way for the reformation, when the human mind was finally freed from its shackles. Superstition lost its power; for the Roman Catholics, that they might preserve the remains of theirs, were obliged in many countries to follow the example of the Protestants, in enlightening the people. But the extension of knowledge is fatal to the Roman Catholic doctrines; hence far from preserving their power by this means, they have reduced it to a mere name, in one or two nations only excepted, and in these it is fast declining. BARCA.

FOR THE WEEKLY VISITANT.

Mr. Pool,

The conduct of the Ephesians towards the incendiary who burned the Temple of Diana, has been commented upon with great severity by the various historians, who have published to the world, the most remarkable events of antiquity; alleging, that the very measures which were taken by the rulers of Ephesus to veil in oblivion the name of the author of an act which he performed with a view of immortalizing his name, were such as would effectually tend to hand it down to latest posterity. But if the observations which have been communicated to me by an epistolary friend are correct, every imputation of that kind are at once removed. The manner in which he has considered the subject appearing altogether novel, I have taken the liberty of transcribing a part of his letter, with a desire that it may be made public.

*Extract of a Letter, from J. T*******, to H. A. S. D*******.*

"In the course of my reading, I have frequently seen the circumstance of the destruction of the Temple of Diana mentioned. You will recollect that the person who burnt it, did it with a view of immortalizing his name, and that the magistrates of Ephesus condemned him to death; and also decreed, that any person who should speak or write his name, should suffer death. You will also recollect the remarks which have been made by authors on this subject, that the magistrates of Ephesus could not have taken a more effectual method to perpetuate the name of the destroyer of this temple, than by recording it in the body of their laws. But it appears to me, that the Ephesians were not such great fools as they have been represented. We well know, that they very frequently gave names * to persons on account of some remarkable transaction in which they had distinguished themselves, which names were significant of such transaction. In the Greek language, *Heros* signified Diana, and *tratus* a destroyer, making Herostratus the very name

* Vide the Travels of Anacharsis, on the derivation of Grecian names.

of the destroyer of the Temple of Diana. Hence it appears to me, that the Ephesian senate condemned this violator of the Temple of their Goddess, under a new name, indicative of the crime for which he was condemned.—Whether I am right in this conjecture or not, I am not in a situation to determine, not having any of those authors within my reach which it would be necessary to consult."

ORIGINAL POETRY.

NOCTURNAL MUSIC.

What holy power of deep delight
Steals on the drowsy ear of night,
  At Nature's slumbering hour;
When o'er her visage, wrapt in gloom,
Broods the deep silence of the tomb,
  And fancy's magic power.

The heavenly influence, pleased to find
An unclos'd inlet to the mind,
  Winds in her viewless way;
Then up to fancy's throne ascends,
And there with night's dim visions blends,
  The sweet tones' wreathed play.

As when 'mong death's unbodied host
The Trojan o'er the infernal coast
  With dreadful footsteps sped;
As on his beamy *mortal* blade
Hell's lurid radiance fiercely played,
  The trooping spectres fled.

So when the notes, that load the wind,
Pierce the dark recess of the mind,
  Where dreams and phantoms dwell,
'Mong their dim forms, the sweet tones play,
The obscure enchantment melts away,
  And bursts the wizard spell.

Roused in the deep profound of night,
A distant star rayed on my sight
  Her pale unborrow'd beam,
A lucid gem, whose punctual glance
Shot thro the unfathomed blue expanse
  A languid, shivery gleam.

As breathed along the heavenly strain
A deeper stillness seemed to reign
  O'er nature's darkened womb;
Anon adown night's sable vest
A spangle from her glittering crest
  Streamed thro the dusky gloom.

So thro the dreary courts of Death
Shall rave the clarion's tempest breath
  Roused from his brazen sleep;
With such a deep terrific peal,
That even Death's iron ear shall feel,
  The dead from slumber leap.

The poet now with look that burns,
And filled with fond expectance turns
  To read MARIA'S eyes;
O round thy temples let me bind
The wreath, thy raptured bard has twined—
  I saw a smile dart by.

ALEXIS.

Mr. Pool,

The author intends to publish, provided you like them, a succession of Fables in the Visitant.

FABLE I.

A tabby cat took great delight,
To sit amid the shades of night,
  And watch for rat or mouse;
But all her skill could not succeed
To catch a rat of meanest breed,
  That long had plagu'd the house.

He nibbled all the pies and tarts,
And left his filth on rounds and hearts,
  Which made the mistress scold.
For this the cat was often beat,
And Molly's self was called a cheat,
  As pies and tarts had told.

It chanc'd one night, when all was still,
The rat crept out to take his fill,
  Unconscious of the foe,
But tabby from behind the pies
Sprung, in her might, with staring eyes,
  And seiz'd him in her claw.

O, mercy, spare me, cry'd the rat.
Thou meanest thing, reply'd the cat,
  More vile in asking life;
Wretch, art thou not a hypocrite,
—A lazy thief, with only wit
  To keep our house in strife.

With that, the cat, in justice' laws,
Thrust through his side her teeth and claws,
  As he breath'd out a groan,
And said, O thou, who dost decide
Upon another's ways, to chide,
  Pray, first observe your own.

ÆSOP.

MISCELLANY.

THE MERCY OF AFFLICTION.

AN EASTERN TALE.

Bozaldab, caliph of Egypt, had dwelt securely for many years in the silken pavillions of pleasure, and had every morning anointed his head with the oil of gladness, when his only son Aboram, for whom he had crowded his treasuries with gold, extended his dominions with conquests, and secured them with impregnable frotresses, was suddenly wounded, as he was hunting, with an arrow from an unkown hand, and expired in the field.

Bozaldab, in the distraction of grief and despair, refused to return to his palace, and retired to the gloomiest grotto in the neighboring mountain; he there rolled himself on the dust, tore away the hairs of his hoary beard, and dashed the cup of consolation that patience offered him to the ground. He suffered not his minstrels to approach his presence; but listened to the screams of the melancholy birds of midnight, that flit through the solitary vatuls and echoing chambers of the pyramids. "Can that God be benevolent," he cried, "who thus wounds the soul, as from an ambush, with unexpected sorrows, and crushes his creatures in a moment with irremediable calamity? Ye dying Imans, prate to us no more of the justice and the kindness of an all-directing and all-loving Providence! He, whom ye pretend reigns in Heaven, is so far from protecting the miserable sons of men, that he perpetually delights to blast the sweetest flowrets in the garden of Hope; and, like a malignant giant, to beat down the strongest towers of happiness with the iron mace of his anger. If this Being possessed the goodness and the power with which flattering priests have invested him, he would doubtless be inclined and enabled to banish those evils which render the world a dungeon of distress, a vale of vanity and woe.—I will continue in it no longer!"

At that moment he furiously raised his hand, which despair had armed with a dagger, to strike deep into his bosom; when suddenly thick flashes of lightning shot through the cavern, and a being of more than human beauty and magnitude, arrayed in azure robes, crowned with amaranth, and waving a branch of palm in his right hand, arrested the trembling and astonished caliph, and said with a majestic smile, "follow me to the top of this mountain. Look from hence," said the awful conductor; "I am Caloc, the angel of peace; look from hence into the valley."

Bozaldab opened his eyes and beheld a barren, a sultry and solitary island, in the midst of which sat a pale, meagre and ghastly figure. It was a merchant just perishing with famine, and lamenting that he could find neither wild berries, nor a single spring in this forlorn desert; and begging the protection of heaven against the tigers that would now certainly destroy him, since he had consumed the last fuel that he had collected to make nightly fires to affright them. He then cast a casket of jewels on the sand, as a trifle of no use; and crept, feeble and trembling, to an eminence, where he was accustomed to sit every evening to watch the setting sun, and to give a signal to any ship that might haply approach the Island.

"Inhabitant of Heaven," cried Bozaldab, "suffer not this wretch to perish by the fury of wild beasts." "Peace," said the angel, "and observe."

He looked again, and behold a vessel arrived at the desolate Isle. What words can paint the raptures of the starving merchant, when the Captain offered to transport him to his native country, if he would reward him with half the jewels in his casket. No sooner had this pitiless commander received the stipulated sum, than he held a consultation with his crew, and they agreed to seize the remaining jewels and leave the unhappy exile in the same helpless and lamentable condition in which they discovered him. He wept and trembled, intreated and implored in vain.

"Will Heaven permit such injustice to be practised!" exclaimed Bozaldab. —"Look again," said the angel, "and behold the very ship in which, short-sighted as thou art, thou wishedst the merchant might embark, dashed in pieces on a rock: Dost thou hear the cries of the sinking sailors? Presume not to direct the Governor of events. The man whom thou hast pitied shall be taken from this dreary solitude, but not by the method thou wouldst pre-

scribe. His vice was avarice, by which he became not only abominable, but wretched; he fancied some mighty charm in wealth, which, like the wand of Ebdiel, would gratify every wish, and obviate every fear. This wealth he has now been taught not only to despise, but abhor; he cast his jewels upon the sand, and confessed them to be useless: he offered part of them to the mariners, and perceived them to be pernicious; he has now learnt, that they are rendered useful or vain, good or evil, only by the situation and temper of the possessor. Happy is he whom distress has taught wisdom! But turn thine eyes to another and more interesting scene."

The caliph instantly beheld a magnificent palace, adorned with the statues of his ancestors wrought in jasper; the ivory doors of which, turning on hinges of the gold of Golconda discovered a throne of diamonds, surrounded with the rajas of fifty nations, and with ambassadors of various habits and different complexions; on which sat Aboram, the much lamented son of Bozaldab, and by his side a Princess fairer than a Houri.

"Gracious Allah!—It is my son," cried the caliph—"Oh, let me hold him to my heart!"—"Thou canst not grasp an unsubstantial vision," replied the angel.—"I am now shewing thee what would have been the destiny of thy son, had he continued longer upon the earth."—"And why," returned Bozaldab, "was he not permitted to continue? Why was not I suffered to be witness of so much felicity and power?" "Consider the sequel," replied he who dwells in the Heavens.—Bozaldab looked earnestly and saw the countenance of his son, on which he had been used to behold the placid smile of simplicity and the vivid blushes of health, now distorted with rage, and now fixed in the insensibility of drunkenness; it was again animated with disdain, it became pale with apprehension, and appeared to be withered by intemperance; his hands were stained with blood, and he trembled by turns with fury and terror; the palace so lately shining with oriental pomp, changed suddenly into the cell of a dungeon, where his son lay stretched out on the cold pavement, gagged and bound, with his eyes put out. Soon after he preceived the favorite sultana, who before was seated by his side, enter with a bowl of poison, which she compelled Aboram to drink, and afterwards married the successor to his throne.

"Happy" said Caloc, "is he whom Providence has, by the angel of death, snatched from guilt! from whom that power is withheld, which, if he had possessed, would have accumulated upon himself yet greater misery than it could bring upon others."

"It is enough," cried Bozaldab; "I adore the inscrutable schemes of Omniscience! From what dreadful evil has my son been rescued by a death which I rashly bewailed as unfortunate and premature: a death of innocence and peace which has blessed his memory on earth, and transmitted his soul above the skies."

"Cast away the dagger," replied the heavenly messenger, "which thou wast preparing to plunge into thine own heart. Exchange complaint for silence, and doubt for adoration. Can a mortal look down with giddiness and stupefaction, into the vast abyss of eternal wisdom? Can a mind that sees not infinitely, perfectly comprehend any thing among an infinity of objects mutually relative? Can the channels, which thou hast cut to receive the annual inundations of the Nile, contain the water of the Ocean?—Remember, that perfect happiness is an attribute as incommunicable as perfect power and eternity."

The angel while he was speaking thus, stretched out his pinions to fly back to the Empyreum; and the flutter of his wings was like the rushing of a cataract.

DETACHED EXTRACTS.

A man evidently poor in purse, is always concluded to be poor in spirit; and although he be honest, wise, learned, well deserving, and of exceeding good parts, he is contemned, neglected, forsaken, considered a low slave, a vile drudge, an odious fellow, a common eye-sore, scarcely fit to be made a footstool. A poor man can have no learning, no knowledge, no civility, scarcely common sense; and if he speaks, "What a babbler he is!" Dante,

whose works have rendered his fame immortal, was once ignominiously excluded from company on account of his poverty: Teretius was placed at the lower end of Cecilius's table, merely because he was poorly dressed: and Terence, the celebrated Roman poet, was, in his adversity left and abandoned by his former illustrious friends and admirers, and suffered to die in melancholy distress on a foreign shore.

Weather works on all, in different degrees, but most on those who are disposed to melancholy. The Devil himself seems to take the opportunity of foul and tempestuous weather to agitate our spirits, and vex our souls; for as the sea waves, so are the spirits and humors in our bodies tossed with tempestuous winds and storms.

Like the man who could not find a tree throughout the wood, on which he could hang himself with any pleasure, so no man can find a state of life capable of affording perfect satisfaction.—

While thus around the foul winds blow,
Our earth-born cares more bitter grow;
Sweet Hope the tortur'd bosom flies;
The heart, deep sunk, desponding dies;
The mind, with rays no longer bright,
Sinks down, and sets in endless night.

Those who are disposed to be facetious and jocular should keep within the limits of becoming mirth, and be careful not to indulge their gay and frolicksome delight at the expence of another's happiness; but should particularly restrain it in the presence of those who are any way inclined to melancholy; for "a heavy heart bears not a nimble tongue."

To upbraid and hit a man in the teeth with misfortunes, of whatever kind they may be, is ungenerous, indecent, unbecoming, cruel, and unpardonable.

HUMOUR.

Affair of honour. Some weeks since, two hair dressers having quarrelled in a public house, retired to fight it out. The one was a tall lank man; the other short, thick, and plethoric. After a few rounds, the combatant whose rotundity unfitted him for works of lasting prowess, just found breath to whisper forth "I'll fight no more."—The other anxiously catching the half-formed sounds, asked, "What does he say?" "Say," cried one of the seconds, "why he says he'll fight another hour." The devil he does," returned the other, "then I'll fight no longer." *Fatty* was accordingly declared *victor*, and led from the field in triumph.

MARRIAGES.

In this town, Mr. Thomas Barker, to Miss Mary Hitchens. Mr. Wm. Rowel, to Miss Rebecca Cloutman. Mr. Joshua Symonds, to Miss Margaret Green.

DEATHS.

At Beverly, Mrs. Sarah Wallace, wife of Mr. John W. æt. 41. At Danvers, Widow Sarah Goldthwait, æt. 89. In this town, Mr. George Mullikin, æt. 16, son of Mr. Samuel M. of Lynn.

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